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The Boston Globe**JUSTICE IN SLOW MOTION****Author(s): BRIAN MCGRORY Date: June 3, 2003 Page: B1 Section: Metro/Region**

Given what is known, given what's been said, there appears to be precious little doubt that the Boston police and Suffolk County prosecutors framed a man in one of the highest-profile murders this city has ever seen.

It's bad enough, the investigation and conviction of Shawn **Drumgold** in the 1988 shooting death of 12-year-old Tiffany Moore. But what makes it worse is the reactive lethargy on the part of the district attorney today. You see, **Drumgold** sits in jail, in a dank cell in a state prison where every day feels like a lifetime and a month might as well be an eternity - all for a crime he didn't commit.

Four key prosecution witnesses have recanted their statements and testimony against him since the Globe's Dick **Lehr** started probing the case, one of them telling **Lehr**, "It's a lie. It's wrong, completely wrong." All of the witnesses said they were cajoled and threatened by police into their testimony, and potential alibis said they, too, were bullied into silence.

Another witness suffered from a form of brain cancer that affected her memory and perception - a fact that authorities may have understood but never shared with the jury.

So if you're Suffolk District Attorney Daniel F. Conley, or his assistant, David Meier, you thump podiums, right? You launch a breakneck probe. You correct the record - loudly, clearly, quickly.

Well, maybe. **Drumgold's** lawyer, Rosemary Curran Scapicchio, appears to be on her own - **Lehr** aside. She's taken sworn affidavits from all witnesses and is ready to present them in court. She's prepared to hold an evidentiary hearing tomorrow, if asked. When a man's liberty is lost, days matter.

The district attorney, meanwhile, is taking his time. Prosecutors are pushing to hold off any significant hearing until at least August. Conley says he's conducting an internal investigation, but it remains unclear what, if anything, is being done. A month after **Lehr's** 5,000-word report, no witnesses have been reinterviewed, no police actions probed. Officials are reading over old files - slowly.

"If this turns out to be an innocent man, we're going to let him go," Conley said yesterday. "But these things take time."

The maddening part is that Conley is a good and reasonable man, and his prosecutor on the case, Meier, is one of the best in the state. They are watching an opportunity seep away.

Back then, in the late '80s, the poor neighborhoods were tortured by the prevalence of crack and the tyranny of guns. Overworked, overwrought police made up the rules as they went along. Justice morphed into injustice too easily.

Conley has an opportunity to clear another ugly bit from the past and, as important, advertise the freshness of the day. In 2003, police rules are tighter, detectives more in tune with the people they investigate, forensics as important as eyewitnesses.

A man sits in jail for a murder he didn't commit. Jurisprudence is good, and hesitance is unacceptable.

Reporter's note: Many readers have inquired about any results from a couple of recent columns, so here they are, good and bad.

First, the city is proceeding quickly to erect a monument to former mayor Kevin White, who has fallen ill. A committee has been formed. A consultant has been hired. A presentation is scheduled to be made to the Brown Fund, a city trust that oversees and funds art in public spaces, next week.

"We should have something for him," Mayor Menino, a one-time White adversary, and now a fan, told me. "He changed the course of this city."

Second, the Martha's Vineyard wedding of Eric Alexander and Kristina, his Lithuanian-born bride, will go on as planned Saturday. But it will occur without Kristina's mother, who was denied a visa and has received no new considerations.

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